NOTE VI.

ON THE SPECIFIC VALUE OF LEVAILLANT'S TRAQUET COMMANDEUR

BY

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In his Histoire naturelle des oiseaux d'Afrique, Vol. IV, p. 84, pl. 189, Levaillant described and figured, under the name of »Traquet Commandeur", a species of Bird, the type of which made part of the old Cabinet Temminck and is at present contained in the Collections of the Leyden Museum.

Our bird in question agrees very well with the colored plate given by Levaillant, with the exception of the shoulder-patch, which in the bird is white with a well pronounced rosy tinge, the white feathers being broadly tipped with rosy, especially so near the edge of the wing. The same is the case in Levaillant's plate, only is the rose color on the tips to the feathers much exaggerated.

This tropical West-African form, which seems to be very rare in collections, differs from its southern and eastern congeners by its entirely black head and the white shoulder-patch occupying the lesser and median wing-coverts only, leaving the greater ones entirely black.

The synonymy of the Traquet Commandeur, which has to bear the name of

Thamnolaea nigra (Vieill.),

will be as follows:

Oenanthe nigra, Vieill. N. Dict. d'Hist. Nat. XXI, p. 431 (1818).

Saxicola nigra, Gray, Gen. B. I, p. 179 (1846).
Myrmecocichla nigra, Bp. Consp. I, p. 302 (1850); Hartl. Orn. W. Afr. p. 65 (1857); Bocage, Orn. d'Ang. p. 268 (1881).
Myrmecocichla levaillanti, Rchw. J. f. O. 1882, p. 212.

Under the name of *Sylvia nigra*, Vieillot mentioned in Encycl. Méth. II, 1823, p. 489, a white-capped bird, so that this name has to be referred to the southern or eastern form. Whether the forms with white on head or throat, which are known under the names of *Thamnolaea shelleyi* Sharpe, *leucolaema* Rchw. and *arnotti* Tristr., belong all to one and the same species, as Dr. Reichenow suggests, or not, I dare not say, having at my disposal only the southern form with a white superciliary stripe, a form which I mentioned as *T. arnotti* in N. L. M. 1888, p. 227. (Mr. Van der Kellen, whom we owe that bird, has sent a female specimen of the same species, probably a young one, the whole plumage of which is olive brown, all the feathers above and below being edged with fulvous brown, while not the least trace of white is to be seen on head or wing-coverts).

Whenever the southern and eastern forms, with more or less white on the head and a large white wing-patch which occupies, with the exception of the tips, also the greater wing-coverts, might prove to belong to one and the same species, this latter would receive the name of

Thamnolaea arnotti (Tristr.)

with the following synonymy:
Sylvia nigra, Vieill. Encycl. Méth. II, p. 489 (1823).
Saxicola arnotti, Tristram, Ibis, 1869, p. 206, pl. 6.
Saxicola shelleyi, Sharpe, Layard's Birds of South Afr. p. 246.
Myrmecocichla leucolaema, Rchw. Orn. Centralbl. 1880, p. 181.

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